

Hi. I'm Larry Ridenhour. I'm the recreation planner in the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. I've been on the RMIS team now for a little over 10 years, and the area that I work in has the highest concentration of nesting birds of prey in all of North America and one of the top five places in the world. I spend most of my time out visiting with people who are there to see the birds, which gives me a lot of time to do a lot of bird watching myself, which is one of my favorite pastimes. I have worked for BLM for about 16 years and look forward to someday when I can retire.

Hi. My name's Larry Ridenhour. I'm a recreation planner in Boise, Idaho. In this section you'll learn about special area designations. At the end of this session, you will be able to explain when to use area designations in RMIS, you'll be able to create a new area designation and its segments, create a formula for an area segment, apply an existing formula to a segment, and finally how to add visitor use numbers to an area segment.

First, let's look at exactly what special area designations are. Now as recreation planners, we often manage areas that have some type of special designation. These can include areas of critical environmental concern or ACECs, national historic areas, national historic landmarks, national natural landmarks, national recreation and scenic areas, national wilderness areas, national historic register sites, outstanding natural areas, primitive areas, research natural areas, and wilderness study areas. We had a lot of different categories, but by far the ones that we will be using most often are ACECs, wilderness areas, and WSAs. All of these types of areas have certain things in common. They may cover a small or large area, they may include multiple recreation sites within them, a lot of times they have a known amount of use for a specific area, and users may visit one or more of the sites in that area.

So how does the RMIS program handle area designations? One important thing to remember is that if visitor use numbers are not entered in an area designation such as a WSA, you will not be able to run a report to display use numbers for the area. Another way to think of it is that visitor use added at the site only shows up at that site. Visitor use added in an area designation shows up in the area and any site included in the area designation formula.

Let's start by looking at an example. Here we have an outline of a wilderness study area. On each side there are roads. Also, within that area we have on the west side a trailhead site with some trails associated with it, and on the east side we have a trailhead site, also with some trails associated with that. Let's say that we're very diligent and each month we collect use numbers at those trailheads. So we have use for each trailhead for each month throughout the year, and we have a yearly total. So we have 689 visits to the west side trailhead. We have 584 visits to the east side trailhead. Now if we're just collecting that information at the site, we would have to know that each of these sites are within this WSA in order to get an estimate for the WSA use. We would have to take each site and

add them together to get 1273 total visits. Now if you get a data call from Washington and you need quickly to get what are your WSA visits, if you only have one WSA it may be pretty simple. But if you have 6 or 8 or 10 or more WSAs or special areas you're trying to collectively get use numbers and you have a couple dozen different sites within all these different areas, suddenly this task becomes very difficult and could take several days to pull the information together. It would be very simple if all of these special designations were set up in RMIS so you could pull that information very quickly. We can do this using the area segments.

In the RMIS database we can set the entire WSA up as a special area and within that create one segment that will include the entire WSA. This way you will be able to very quickly pull up our total use numbers for that area. The segment formula takes the estimated use for a given area segment and allocates that to one or more sites identified in that segment. This allows you to track your use for that segment and at each site within that area.

What if we wanted to keep track of use a little bit different? Let's say that our west side trailhead is used primarily by horseback riders and the east side trailhead is used primarily by hikers and day use, and we want to keep track of those two uses separately. We can do that by setting up a segment to include the west side trail system and a second segment that would include the east side trails. The RMIS program takes the use added to each segment and sums them for a total amount of use for the entire area in our example, the WSA. This allows you to make use estimates in each segment area, a total for the entire designated area, and use at each site within the area. This is the same concept that's used for rivers, roads, and trails in the RMIS program.

Now how do we access our area information? If you go to the RMIS home page, on the left navigation bar you will see a button labeled area designations. Also, in the center of the page you will see a drop-down that will list all the areas that you have identified for your office. If you click on area designations, you'll be taken to the area designation information page. This will show you the name of the area, the ID for the area, any management plans for the area, the type of designation, in this case a national wilderness area, and at the bottom it will show you all of the segments for that area.

So what exactly are these area segments and why do we need them. Well, the visitor use is accounted for, for area designations in the area segments. An area designation must have at least one segment, but you can have more if you wish. Why might you want more than one segment? You could have different types of use. In our example, horseback riding in one section and day use hiking in another section that we want to keep track of. You may have different physical characteristics of an area. You may have an area that is primarily high desert within a separate segment that is a deep canyon and you want to keep track of those different use areas. You could have significant differences in the access

points that you want to keep track of your use. Remember, you may only need one segment for an area, but you can have as many as you would like.

Now that you know a little about area designations, I'll show you how to create a new area designation and its segments. Through this training we'll create a new WSA called the Bogus Wilderness Study Area, and we'll create two segments for it, an east side and a west side. So let's get into the RMIS program and get started.

Now we're in the RMIS training database, and we're going to create our new Bogus WSA as a special area designation. We start by going over to the area designation button, clicking on it, and bringing up the information page, and we can see what special areas we already have listed in our RMIS program. We're going to create a new one, so we click the new button, and at this point we just need to add in our new information. We're gonna call it the Bogus WSA. We're gonna just make up an ID number here. We have to scroll down to the bottom. This is a wilderness study area. If it extended beyond our office boundary we would put a check mark here. We could add any notes that we needed, but we're not gonna do that now. The management plan that would apply to this would be the Owyhee RMP. This is all the information we need to create our new area. So we're gonna click save.

You'll notice that a segment called Entire was created when we created the new area designation, and that's done automatically by the RMIS program because each area must have at least one segment. Our WSA is gonna have two segments so we will edit the one generated by the program and then create a new one. To edit this current area segment, we click the area segments button, and then to edit we click the highlighted name. At this point you can change the name, and we will start with the West Segment, segment number we'll leave at 1, BLM acres 1500, and unfortunately right now the available laws does not list the National Wilderness Act, so we're gonna click save and we have our first segment, and you'll see that we have a default formula automatically generated by the program, and we'll change that in the next section.

Right now we need to create our east segment. We'll click new again, change this name to East Segment, our segment number will be 0002, and the BLM acres for this one is 1800 acres. You can click save. Now in our drop-down we have our East Segment and our West Segment for the Bogus WSA, and again you can see we have a default formula automatically generated by the RMIS program. If we go back to area designations, in our area segments list we can see the two segments we just created. At this point we need to create new formulas, and we'll learn how to do that in the next section.

In this section I'll be showing you how to create a formula for an area designation and also how to apply an existing formula to an area designation.

Now let's start by writing down exactly how we want our formula to look. We have the west segment, which is primarily our horseback riders, and so we're gonna have the west side trailhead. We're gonna allocate 100% of the use to that trailhead site. Then while the riders are actually on the trail, we're gonna allocate that to the Dispersed Owyhee Birds of Prey site. Again, 100% participation there. Now to look at activities is going to be a pretty simple formula. They have horseback riding 100% participation, and at the trailhead they are there on average for about one hour. Out on the trail for the dispersed area site we have horseback riding 100% participation, and on average they are out for about three and a half hours. For our east segment for the Bogus WSA, the east side trailhead again gets 100% participation, and the Dispersed Owyhee Birds of Prey also gets 100% of the use. The activities on the east side are hiking 100% participation. At the trailhead they are there for about 15 minutes or 0.25 hours, and actually on the trail for the dispersed area they are hiking, 100% participating, on average for about 2 hours. Now with this formula written down we can go into the RMIS program and create our new formula for the west segment, and then we're gonna learn how to apply an existing formula to the east segment.

OK. Now we're back in the training database and we need to create new formulas for our trail segments. We're actually gonna create one new formula and apply an existing formula that I created earlier to our area segments. So first we need to get to our area segments. We click area designations, and our Bogus WSA comes up. We'll start by creating a new formula for our west segment, so we want to click area segments, change to our west segment, and we see we have our default formula. That's what we're going to change. Click on the name to bring up the default formula. Now to edit this formula we need to click the name again. This will open up the formula editor page. I'm gonna scroll a little bit to the right so you can see better.

Now we will start, very important thing, change the default formula name. A lot of people forget to do this and end up with a lot of formulas called default. We'll call this our west segment formula. Now we have to click this site, so we scroll down until we find our west side trailhead, and from our earlier example we're gonna allocate 100% of the use. Under activities we're gonna pick horseback riding. If you type H it will jump to the H's so we can find horseback riding quickly. Now 100% of the participants are using the trailhead, and our average hours will be one. Now at this point we want to add in our Dispersed Owyhee Birds of Prey site to account for the use on the trail itself, so we click the insert site button. The screen will refresh. I have to scroll down and find our new place holder here. At this point we'll look for Dispersed Owyhee Birds of Prey. Again we have 100% of the use allocated to that site. We need to find horseback riding again. The percentage again is 100%. Average hours though on the trail are three and a half.

At this point we'll scroll back up, scroll to the left so we can see our navigation bar, and we're gonna click save. Now we can see our formula. We have horseback riding being attributed to the trailhead itself, and the users are getting set for the ride for about an hour. Then we have three and a half hours actually out on the trail itself. This formula looks good. We're gonna go back to our area segments, and we can see that the visitor use formula for the west segment is our west segment formula.

At this point, we need to create a formula for our east segment. Now instead of just creating a new segment the way we just did for the west, we're going to apply a formula that I created earlier. Why might you want to use a pre-existing formula? Well, it could be a simple formula that can be used for several areas. So in order to do this, start like we did before. Click default formula. That will show our default. Click the name again, and again, this is exactly what we did before where we started adding our sites and activities, so you'll notice on the left there is a button that says choose. This allows us to choose a formula from our master list. Click the choose button. This will open up a page showing our existing area segment formulas, and this is the one I already created, east side formula, and on the right hand we show our area segments.

Now this is showing segments for all the special areas. If we wanted to see just the Bogus WSA we could highlight it, hit select, and now we only see the segment for the Bogus WSA. So we're gonna click our east side formula, we're gonna click the east segment, and we're gonna click save. At this point, we get a warning because it's saying you're about to apply a different formula than you currently have, and that's exactly what we want to do. Click the OK, and now we see our east site formula. If we click our area segments, we see that this formula is now being applied to our east segment. These are two different ways that you can replace your default formulas, or you might replace an existing formula for your area segments. Now at this point, we can now add our visitor use estimates to our area segments.

In this section I will show you how to add visitor use estimates to your area designation segments. Earlier we created a new Bogus WSA and two segments within it. We also learned how to create a new segment formula for the west segment and how to apply an existing formula to the east segment. We are now ready to add our visitor use estimates to each of the segments so that we can more easily generate a report showing the use for our WSAs.

So let's get into the RMIS program and add our visitor use. Back in the training database now. To start adding visitor use we need to click the visitor use button, and that is located at the bottom of almost every page in the RMIS program. We click visitor use. That will open up our add visits page. Now by default, at the top it says add visitation to, and it starts with sites. We need to switch that to say area designations. Also by default it lists all the area designations that we have in our office, and so we're gonna switch to just Bogus WSA that we'll refresh and

just show the two segments that we just created. And by holding the shift key I can select both segments, and we also have a chance to change the default start and end dates. Now from our earlier example we saw that the west trail system had 689 visits for the year and the east had 584 visits. Now if you're adding visits just once a year, you would leave your default start and end dates, but hopefully you're adding use a little more often, at least quarterly. If you're taking the time to collect data on a monthly or quarterly basis, it doesn't take that much time to add it into your RMIS database.

We're gonna leave this for the entire fiscal year. We're gonna go to the left navigation bar and click add visits, and it bring up both the east segment and the west segment with our default beginning and end dates. Now we scroll to the right. We also have automatically one visit added. We're gonna change these. Our east segment was 584 visits. Our west segment was 689 visits. Scroll back to the left and click save, and at this point people are confused, did it actually save it, because we're brought back to our add visits page. Now one way we can check is to go into our area segments. We'll click the area segments button. And now for fiscal year 2009 we can see for the east segment our 584 visits. We switch to our west segment. We can see 689 visits for those segments. If we wanted to look at just the use at the sites, we would have to go to our office page, select the correct RMA, and in this case it would be the Owyhee Birds of Prey. Find our east trailhead, and we can see that we have under visits 584 total visits, and you'll notice it doesn't come from site visits. It comes from area segment visits. We look at the west trailhead and we'll see also our 689 visits coming from the area segments.

Another thing you may have noticed is how quickly it was to add our visitor use numbers. It took less than a minute to add our area segment estimates, and now if we get a quick data call from the Washington office saying what are your WSA visits so far this year, we can quickly look that up and get a quick response to our Washington Office.

To summarize what you've learned in this session, you now know how to use area designations in the RMIS program, how to create a new area designation and its segments, how to create a formula for an area segment, and apply an existing formula to an area segment, and you know how to add visitor use numbers to an area segment. Now that you have learned all about area designations, it's time to go out and find your own special place on public lands and enjoy.